

## Know Your Local Government

Grade Level: 4-12  
Time: 2-3 class sessions

### Objectives:

- Become familiar with the structure of local government and the people in various positions of power.
- Identify actions by those in power that directly affects our lives, and ways people can influence the actions of these people in power.
- Develop a simple flow chart of the system of government in their community.

**Curricular Connections:** Language Arts, Civics

**Materials:** Several local newspapers, internet access, phone book.

### Procedure:

- 1) In cooperative learning groups students will discuss why they think rules and government are necessary and what government does.
- 2) Now as a whole class brainstorm the ideas discussed in the cooperative learning groups. At this point start talking about national, state, and local levels of government.
- 3) Brainstorm with the class and develop a list of local government positions such as the mayor, governor, city council, etc.
- 4) Students draw up a flow chart of local government positions and research then fill in the names and contact information of the people currently in them.
- 5) Discuss with the class how people can have the greatest influence on local government, such as, they can know the people better, know the issues better, and know what to do and how to do it to in order to make the biggest difference.
- 6) Have students attend at least one city council meeting, a press conference or other political event, or interview a government official then write a few paragraphs about their experience.

### Reflection:

- Students will write a brief essay describing what they learned from attending
- Students will journal about articles from the daily newspaper showing interaction of the mayor, assembly, different service departments and the local citizens. For each article have them write a brief statement explaining how the actions in the article can affect their life.

### Assessment:

- Government flow charts and contact sheet.
- Journal entries.

**Source:** Adapted from Peg Stout; Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan #:AELP-GOV0024